DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 337 385 SO 021 386

AUTHOR Brophy, Jere; Alleman, Janet
TITLE Social Studies Education Should Be Driven by Major Social Education Goals. Research Series No. 205.
INSTITUTION Michigan State Univ., East Lansing. Inst. for Research on Teaching.
PUB DATE Apr 91
NOTE 23p.
PUB TYPE Reports - Descriptive (141)

EDRS PRICE MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Curriculum Development; *Educational Change; *Educational Objectives; Educational Philosophy; Elementary Secondary Education; *Material Development; Outcomes of Education; Role of Education; *Social Studies; Student Educational Objectives; Teaching Methods

ABSTRACT

A major problem with most contemporary social studies textbook series is that they cannot see the forest for the trees. Instead of being designed to accomplish major, long-term goals that reflect the purpose of social education, they have been constructed to cover long lists of topics and skills found in state and district curriculum guidelines. Frequently not only the content but even the stated goals in these series are trite. As a result, they are long on isolated facts and skills, but short on integration and application of social learning. The authors advocate honoring major social education goals, not just in theory but in practice, and offer examples of what this might mean in a primary-grade unit on shelter as a basic human need and in a fifth-grade U.S. history unit on the American Revolution. They conclude with a list of principles that might guide attempts to focus social studies instruction more clearly around major social education goals. An 11-item list of references is included. (Author/DB)

****
* Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made *
* from the original document. *
****

Research Series No. 205

SOCIAL STUDIES INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE DRIVEN BY MAJOR SOCIAL EDUCATION GOALS

Jere Brophy and Janet Alleman

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

X This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.

☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

• Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

"PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

JERE BROPHY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

SO 021 384

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

50

Research Series No. 205

SOCIAL STUDIES INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE DRIVEN BY MAJOR SOCIAL EDUCATION GOALS

Jere Brophy and Janet Alleman

Published by

The Institute for Research on Teaching
College of Education
Michigan State University
East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1034

April 1991

This work is sponsored in part by the Institute for Research on Teaching, College of Education, Michigan State University. The Institute for Research on Teaching is funded from a variety of federal, state, and private sources including the United States Department of Education and Michigan State University. The opinions expressed in this publication do not necessarily reflect the position, policy, or endorsement of the funding agencies.

Institute for Research on Teaching

The **Institute for Research on Teaching** was founded in 1976 at Michigan State University and has been the recipient of major federal grants. Funding for IRT projects is currently received from the U.S. Department of Education, Michigan State University, and other agencies and foundations. IRT scholars have conducted major research projects aimed at improving classroom teaching, including studies of classroom management strategies, student socialization, the diagnosis and remediation of reading difficulties, and school policies. IRT researchers have also been examining the teaching of specific school subjects such as reading, writing, general mathematics, and science and are seeking to understand how factors inside as well as outside the classroom affect teachers. In addition to curriculum and instructional specialists in school subjects, researchers from such diverse disciplines as educational psychology, anthropology, sociology, history, economics, and philosophy cooperate in conducting IRT research. By focusing on how teachers respond to enduring problems of practice and by collaborating with practitioners, IRT researchers strive to produce new understandings to improve teaching and teacher education.

Currently, IRT researchers are engaged in a number of programmatic efforts in research on teaching that build on past work and extend the study of teaching in new directions such as the teaching of subject matter disciplines in elementary school, teaching in developing countries, and teaching special populations. New modes of teacher collaboration with schools and teachers' organizations are also being explored. The Center for the Learning and Teaching of Elementary Subjects, funded by the U.S. Department of Education's Office of Educational Research and Improvement from 1987-92, is one of the IRT's major endeavors and emphasizes the teaching of elementary mathematics, science, social studies, literature, and the arts for understanding, appreciation, and use. The focus is on what content should be taught, how teachers concentrate their teaching to use their limited resources in the best way, and in what ways good teaching is subject-matter specific.

The IRT publishes research reports, occasional papers, conference proceedings, the Elementary Subjects Center Series, a newsletter for practitioners (IRT Communication Quarterly), and lists and catalogs of IRT publications. For more information, to receive a list or catalog, and/or to be placed on the IRT mailing list to receive the newsletter, please write to the Editor, Institute for Research on Teaching, 252 Erickson Hall, Michigan State University, East Lansing, Michigan 48824-1034.

Co-directors:	Jere E. Brophy and Penelope L. Peterson
Senior Researchers:	Linda Alford, Janet Alleman, Tane Akamatsu, Charles Anderson, Linda Anderson, Betsy Becker, Margret Buchmann, Patricia Cianciolo, Gerald Duffy, Carol Sue Englert, James Gallagher, James Gavelek, Sandra Hollingsworth, Magdalene Lampert, Perry Lanier, Wanda May, Richard Navarro, Annemarie Palincsar, Richard Prawat, Ralph Putnam, Taffy Raphael, Stephen Raudenbush, Laura Roehler, Cheryl Rosaen, Kathleen Roth, William Schmidt, John Schwille, David Stewart, M. Teresa Tatto, Mun Tsang, Christopher Wheeler, Suzanne Wilson
Editor:	Sandra Gross
Editorial Assistant:	Brian H. Bode

Abstract

A major problem with contemporary social studies series is that they have lost the forest for the trees. Instead of being constructed to accomplish major, long-term goals that reflect the purposes of social education, they have been constructed to cover long lists of topics and skills found in state and district curriculum guidelines. Often not just the content but even the stated goals in these series are trite, so that they result in versions of social studies that are long on isolated practice of facts or skills but short on integration and application of social learning. The authors advocate honoring major social education goals, not just in theory but in practice, and offer examples of what this might mean in a primary-grade unit on shelter as a basic human need and in a fifth-grade American history unit on the American Revolution. They then conclude with a list of principles that might guide attempts to focus social studies instruction more clearly around major social education goals.

SOCIAL STUDIES INSTRUCTION SHOULD BE DRIVEN BY MAJOR SOCIAL EDUCATION GOALS

Jere Brophy and Janet Alleman[1]

A curriculum is not an end in itself but a means, a tool for accomplishing educational goals. These goals are learner outcomes--the knowledge, skills, attitudes, values, and dispositions to action that one wishes to develop in students. Ideally, curriculum planning and implementation decisions will be driven by these goals, so that each element selected--the basic content, the ways that this content is represented and explicated to students, the questions that will be asked, the types of teacher-student and student-student discourse that will occur, the activities and assignments, and the methods that will be used to assess progress and grade performance--all will be included because they are believed to be needed as means for moving students toward accomplishment of the major goals. The goals are the reason for the existence of the curriculum, and beliefs about what is needed to accomplish them should guide each step in curriculum planning and implementation.

Today's social studies textbook series feature broad but shallow coverage of a great range of topics and skills. Lacking coherence of flow or structuring around key ideas developed in depth, they are experienced as parades of disconnected facts and isolated skills exercises. These problems have evolved as an unintended consequence of publishers' efforts to satisfy state and district curricular guidelines that feature long lists of topics and skills to be covered rather than succinct statements of major goals to be accomplished. If teachers use the textbooks and provided ancillary materials and follow the manuals' lesson development instructions, the result will be a reading/recitation/seatwork curriculum geared toward memorizing disconnected knowledge and practicing isolated skills. Nevertheless, this is what many teachers do, because most elementary teachers and many secondary teachers who are assigned to teach social studies courses have not had enough social studies preparation even to allow them to develop a coherent view of what social education is all about, let alone a rich base of social education knowledge and an associated repertoire of pedagogical techniques. Acting on the assumption that the series has been developed by experts far more knowledgeable about social education purposes and goals than they are, such teachers tend to concentrate on the procedural mechanics of implementation when planning lessons and activities, without giving much thought to their purposes or how they might fit into the larger social education program.

The first of these two italicized paragraphs summarizes the classical view of curriculum development that is widely accepted as fundamental, logical, and even obvious, although it is not often implemented in practice. The second

---

[1]Jere Brophy, University Distinguished Professor of teacher education at Michigan State University, is coordinator of the Classroom Strategy Research Project and co-director of the Institute for Research on Teaching. Janet Alleman, professor of teacher education at MSU, is a senior researcher with the project.

summarizes major findings of recent research on practice, especially critiques of curriculum materials (Brophy, McMahon, & Prawat, 1991; Elliott & Woodward, 1990; Tyson-Bernstein, 1988) and studies of teachers' curriculum planning and implementation (Clark & Peterson, 1986; Thornton, 1991). The contrasts between the two paragraphs reflect what we view as troubling about much of contemporary social education.

Some have reacted to these contrasts by suggesting that the classical view is unrealistic and that notions of ideal practice should be developed from descriptions of actual practice--what curriculum developers and teachers are observed to do. We reject this view, because we believe that (a) rather than representing a consensus among informed practitioners, much current practice represents doomed attempts by series publishers to address overly numerous and conflicting goals simultaneously and doomed attempts by teachers to use these series without sufficient social education backgrounds to enable them to recognize and focus on the most important content and activities and (b) this has contributed to discontent with social education that is indexed by symptoms ranging from student boredom and dislike of social studies to low achievement test scores to civic participation problems such as low voter turnouts and sluggish census returns. We believe that a major reason for such problems is that we have lost the forest for the trees--we have lost sight of the major, long-term goals that reflect the purposes of social education and should drive the development and enactment of social studies curricula. Consequently, we call for a return to the notion of developing curricula as means to accomplish major goals phrased in terms of intended student outcomes--capabilities and dispositions to be developed in students and used in their lives outside of school, both now and in the future.

Social Education Goals in Theory and Practice

There is no lack of goals statements in social education policy documents, curriculum guides, or teachers' manuals. They tend to emphasize citizen education, speaking of providing students with the knowledge, skills, and values that they will need to understand modern life and participate in it effectively as prosocial group members and responsible citizens. Elaborations usually indicate that K-12 social studies courses should prepare students for social and civic participation in modern society, not just teach social science knowledge and procedures. Guidelines published by the NCSS (National Council for the Social Studies, 1979), for example, specify that content should be drawn not just from the social science disciplines but from the arts and humanities, current events, and the students' own lives. They also call for integrating this knowledge content with skills and values content in ways that will help the students to apply what they are learning to their lives outside of school, both now and in the future.

At these lofty levels, social education goals statements make good sense. If they actually drove curriculum development and instructional planning, they probably would yield coherent and effective social studies programs. Unfortunately, however, these major social education goals tend to get lost in the shuffle as policymakers and curriculum planners begin to develop operational plans for implementing them. Typically, these plans involve generation of recommended knowledge topics, skills and subskills, values, attitudes, and participation experiences. These are broken into smaller and smaller subunits as the curriculum guidelines get differentiated across and within grade levels. Gradually, the big picture gets lost, with the result that the ostensibly fundamental purposes and goals do not functionally guide curriculum development and instructional planning.

Curriculum developers and teachers typically do not proceed by asking themselves what students should be able to do as a result of each lesson or unit. If they did, they would focus on those aspects of each topic that their students most need to know about and appreciate the significance of in order to be able to apply their learning to their social and civic lives outside of school. Instruction would focus on these important ideas and related values and skills, developing them in depth and with emphasis on understanding, appreciation, and life application. Within and across units, the curriculum would reveal coherence and functional utility as a method of moving students toward the guiding social education goals.

Instead, however, too many curriculum developers and teachers appear to proceed by asking what knowledge, skills, and values are emphasized in the state and district guidelines for the grade level and then making sure that these are covered, especially the ones that are likely to be tested. With attention focused on coverage of particular topics and subskills, the larger social education purposes and goals that are supposed to guide all of this begin to fade into the background. So do many of the originally recognized connections and intended life applications. There is a general failure to tie things together. Knowledge content gets fragmented into disconnected bits that can be memorized but not easily learned with understanding of their meanings or appreciation of their potential significance. Skills get taught and practiced in isolation from one another and from the knowledge content, instead of being used as tools for using the knowledge content in authentic life applications. The social studies curriculum becomes a collection of miscellaneous definitions, facts, and generalizations to be memorized for tests, instead of functioning as a vehicle for helping students to understand and participate effectively in the social world.

Trite Goals Make for Trite Content

To the extent that content coverage lists rather than major social education goals drive the curriculum, not only the content but even the goals of many of the units and individual lessons become disconnected and trite, often to the extent that they lack life-application potential and thus have little social education value. For example, Naylor and Diem (1987) cite the following hierarchy of curriculum goals as typical for social studies:

> District-wide goal (taken from the NCSS guidelines): to prepare young people to become humane, rational, participating citizens in a world that is becoming increasingly interdependent.
>
> Program-area goal for social studies, K-12: to enable students to recognize and appreciate that people living in different cultures and subcultures are likely to share some common values with other cultures and subcultures and to hold other different values that are rooted in experience and legitimate in terms of their own culture or subculture.
>
> Grade-level goal for social studies, Grade 1: to understand and appreciate that the roles and values of family members may differ according to the structure of the family, its circumstances, and its cultural setting.
>
> Unit-level goal for social studies, Grade 1: to understand that families differ in size and composition. (p. 51)

The last (unit-level) goal is phrased in purely descriptive, knowledge-level language, and it is trite for a unit goal even at the first-grade level. It makes no reference to the anthropological and sociological concepts (e.g., cultures, roles) or to the values and dispositions (e.g., multicultural appreciation, citizen participation) alluded to in the higher level goals. Unless the teacher has a coherent view of the purposes and nature of social education, or unless the manual does an unusually good job of keeping the teacher aware of how particular lessons fit within the big picture, the result is likely to be a version of social studies that is long on isolated practice of facts or skills and short on integration and application of social learning.

Typically, manuals do little or nothing to help the teacher put these low-level goals into perspective as elements in a larger plan to move students toward major social education goals. Most of the time, they do not do so because they cannot do so: The curricula that they represent were not developed systematically to accomplish major social education goals. Instead, they were developed to "cover" long lists of disconnected knowledge topics and isolated skills. The students will learn little or nothing about family values and roles in different cultures; they will only learn that families differ in size and composition, that they grow and change, and that their members work and play together. In short, they will learn a few obvious generalities about families, but not much about variations in family roles across time and culture, the reasons for these variations, or the lifestyle trade-offs that they offer. There is little here to advance the students' knowledge of the human condition, to help them put the familiar into a broader perspective, or even to stimulate their thinking about family as a concept.

There are several consequences, most of them undesirable, to restricting oneself to family size and composition as the focus for a unit goal. The "composition" part at least has potential: If developed properly, it could lead to informative and thought-provoking lessons on family composition and roles as they have evolved through time and as they exist today in different societies. To have much value as social education, however, such lessons would have to emphasize not merely that such differences exist, but why. The students might learn, for example, that a major social effect of industrialization is to reduce the role of the extended family as a functional economic unit and thus to precipitate a shift from the extended family to the nuclear family as the typical household unit. Instead of living and working together as a large extended family, small nuclear families now live in separate households and

spend most of their time with nonrelatives. Their members may be able to pursue a greater range of occupational and lifestyle options than exist in nonindustrialized societies, but they usually must do so without the continuing involvement and support of a large extended family.

Teaching students such conceptually based content about families will help them to put the familiar into a larger perspective. If it is developed effectively through good discussion and activities, such content will help them to understand and appreciate the trade-offs involved in varying economic systems and associated lifestyles and perhaps to function more effectively as family members within society at large. Unfortunately, however, the teachers' manuals that accompany contemporary elementary social studies series rarely even mention such substantive aspects of the topic of family composition, let alone provide teachers with guidance about how to develop them effectively.

Missed opportunities to develop substantive content are just part of the problem. Too often, the content that is developed is inherently trite or else is developed in ways that do not promote progress toward significant social education goals. Triteness is often embodied in the goals themselves, as exemplified here in the focus on family size. First graders are already well aware that families differ in size, so what is the point of making this a major goal? Even worse, what is the point of following up such instruction with exercises requiring students to classify families as either "big" or "small?"

Such lessons or activities lack substantive social education value. They are not in these series because major social education goals suggest the need for them. According to Tyson-Bernstein (1988), they are there because publishers, working from lists of topics and skills to cover, have discovered that a focus on family size provides them with an entry point for inserting certain generic skills exercises into the social studies curriculum (e.g.,

counting the members in depicted families, comparing and contrasting big versus small families). Other such exercises call for the students to infer whether depicted families are "working" or "playing" or to inspect drawings of families depicted before and after an addition has occurred and to circle the depicted family member who represents the addition.

This is not an isolated example. Contemporary social studies series are riddled with units and lessons that feature trite goals and isolated skills exercises rather than development of important social education ideas taught for understanding, appreciation, and application to life outside of school. Units on shelter convey the fact that people live in a great variety of homes, but usually say very little about the reasons why they live in these different kinds of homes and nothing at all about advances in construction materials and techniques, weatherproofing, insulation, or temperature control that have made possible the features of modern housing that most American children take for granted. Units on government mention a few titles (president, governor, mayor), places (Washington, state capitals), and symbols (flag, ballot box), but precious little else. In particular, they say very little about the functions and services performed at various levels of government. Thus, students learn that there is a mayor, a governor, and a president but not what these people or their governments do. In higher grades, students are exposed to reams of geographical and historical facts but without enough focus on major themes and generalizations, cause-and-effect relationships, linkage to local examples and current events, or other instructional framing and scaffolding that would help them to appreciate the significance of the information and to consider its applications to their lives outside of school.

Aligning Social Studies Instruction With Major Social Education Goals

To bring social studies curriculum and instruction into better alignment with major social education goals, we will need to honor those goals not just in theory but in practice. Instead of merely listing them as lofty but non-functional statements of ideals, we will need to reaffirm major social education goals as the reasons for the existence of social studies curricula and begin to use them as the functional bases for curriculum planning. Guided by these goals, we need to ask ourselves what outcomes (capabilities and dispositions) we want students to acquire from a particular curriculum unit, and then plan the unit accordingly. We offer two examples to indicate what this might mean in practice.

A Unit on Shelter

Social studies teaching in the primary grades emphasizes universal human characteristics, needs, and experiences (food, clothing, shelter, transportation, communication, occupations, social rules, government and laws) addressed within the contexts of family, neighborhood, and community. We believe that an important social education goal for each of these topics is to build initial understandings that will enable students to grasp the basics of how that aspect of the social world functions, not only in the local community and in the contemporary United States generally but also in the past and in other cultures today. This would be designed to expand the students' limited purviews on the human condition and especially to help them put the familiar into historical, geographical, and cultural perspective, thus increasing their understanding and appreciation of social phenomena that most of them have so far taken for granted without much awareness or appreciation.

Thus, rather than just teach that shelter is a basic human need and that different forms of shelter exist, the instruction would be designed to help students learn to understand and appreciate the reasons for these different forms of shelter. Students would learn that people's shelter needs are determined in large part by local climate and geographical features and that most housing is constructed using materials adapted from natural resources that are plentiful in the local area. They would learn that certain forms of housing reflect cultural, economic, or geographic conditions (tepees and tents as easily movable shelters used by nomadic societies, stilt houses as adaptation to periodic flooding, highrises as adaptation to land scarcity in urban areas). They would learn that inventions, discoveries, and gradual improvements in construction knowledge and materials have enabled many modern people to live in housing that offers better durability, weatherproofing, insulation, and temperature control, with fewer requirements for maintenance and labor (e.g., cutting wood for a fireplace or shoveling coal for a furnace) than anything that was available to even the richest of their ancestors.

They also would learn that modern industries and transportation make it possible to construct almost any kind of shelter almost anywhere on earth, so that it is now possible for those who can afford it to live comfortably in very hot or very cold climates. These and related ideas would be taught with appeal to the students' sense of imagination and wonder, with emphasis on values as well as knowledge (e.g., consciousness-raising and age-suitable activities relating to the energy efficiency of homes or the plight of the homeless). Development and application activities might include such things as a tour of the neighborhood (in which different types of housing would be identified and discussed) or an assignment calling for students to take home an energy-efficiency inventory to fill out and discuss with their parents. Students

would begin to see the function or significance of elements of their physical and social environment that they were not aware of before, as well as to appreciate their current and future opportunities to make decisions about and exercise some control over aspects of their lives related to their shelter needs.

An American History Unit

In teaching a history unit on the American Revolution (e.g., to fifth graders), our goals would emphasize developing student understanding and appreciation of the origins of American political values and policies. Consequently, our treatment of the Revolution and its aftermath would emphasize the historical events and political philosophies that shaped the thinking of the writers of the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution. Content coverage, questions, and activities would focus on the issues that developed between England and the colonies and on the ideals, principles, and compromises that went into the construction of the Constitution (especially the Bill of Rights). Assignments calling for research, critical thinking, or decision making would focus on topics such as the various forms of oppression that different colonial groups had experienced (and the influence of this on their thinking about government), as well as the ideas of Jefferson and other key framers of the Constitution. There would be less emphasis on Paul Revere or other Revolutionary figures who are not known primarily for their contributions to American political values and policies and less on the details of each of the economic restrictions that England imposed on the colonies. There would be no emphasis at all on the details of particular battles and no activities such as time-consuming construction of dioramas depicting those battles.

In presenting these examples we do not mean to suggest that the illustrated goals, content emphases, and instructional approaches are the only or even necessarily the best ones to adopt in addressing these two topics. Instead, we offer the examples as illustrations of how clarity about one's primary goals helps one to fashion units and lessons that are likely to cohere and function as tools for accomplishing those goals, and in the process, likely to result in instruction that students find meaningful, relevant, and applicable to their lives outside of school. The particular goals that should be emphasized will vary with one's social education philosophy, the ages and needs of the students, and the purposes of the course. Teachers of military history in the service academies, for example, would have very different goals and thus would approach the unit on the American Revolution with very different content emphases than those in our example.

What Teachers Can Do

In response to widespread concern about the shallowness and disconnectedness of contemporary social education series, a few states and districts have begun to pull back from their long lists of content coverage requirements and to place greater emphasis on shorter and more coherent statements of major social education goals and intended outcomes. We hope that this trend continues and creates market conditions that will encourage publishers to develop series that will be more coherent and effective as tools for teaching social studies for understanding, appreciation, and life application.

In the meantime, teachers who desire a more coherent social education curriculum can take certain steps to overcome some of the limitations of materials that feature trite goals, parade-of-facts content, and parade-of-skills-exercises activities. First, they can think through their social

education goals, identifying the capabilities and dispositions that they want to develop in their students throughout the year as a whole and in each of their individual units. Then they can examine their curriculum materials in the light of these goals. Taking the viewpoint of the students, they can read the student text (i.e., not the teacher's manual, which contains more guidance and information) to see what information is included and emphasized and what information is not, noting places where additional structuring or input will be needed in order to focus students' learning on important ideas. Then they can study the teacher's manual, assessing the suggested questions, activities, and evaluation devices to determine the degree to which they will be useful as tools for helping their students to accomplish their primary social education goals. After examining their instructional materials in the light of their goals, teachers will be in a better position to help their students to focus on important aspects of the content (augmenting with additional input if necessary), skip pointless questions and activities, and substitute other questions and activities that support progress toward the goals they wish to emphasize.

Recent research on good subject-matter teaching has identified several key characteristics of instruction that emphasizes understanding, appreciation, and application to life outside of school (Brophy, 1989, 1990; Prawat, 1989). These include development of a limited number of important ideas in depth rather than superficial coverage of breadth; organization of content into networks structured around these important ideas and taught with an emphasis on the connections among them; teacher-student discourse that features reflective discussion and dialogue focused on these key ideas rather than just recitation over specific facts; activities that provide students with opportunities for authentic applications of what they are learning; and evaluation mechanisms

that focus on important understandings, appreciations, and applications rather than on isolated facts or skills.

To create such teaching, one must begin by clarifying one's major social education goals and then considering their implications not only for the kinds of questions and activities that should be included but also for the selection of content to be introduced in the first place and the key ideas around which to structure one's teaching of this content. To the extent that this is accomplished, social studies curricula (whether developed by publishers or by individual teachers) would have the following desirable characteristics.

1. The curriculum would be goals-driven. Everything in it, the content as well as the questions, activities, and evaluation devices, would be included because it is expected to function as a means of promoting progress toward the major social education goals that have been identified for emphasis. Whatever secondary goals it might serve (e.g., allowing for cooperative learning experiences, providing practice in research and writing skills), each content element, question, and activity within each lesson would have a primary purpose linked directly to accomplishment of major social education goals expressed in terms of intended student outcomes (capabilities, dispositions). These purposes would be made clear to the students, so that they could participate in lessons and activities with metacognitive awareness of their goals and metacognitive control of their learning strategies.

2. Knowledge content would be selected for its importance and potential for life applications, and it would be developed and applied accordingly. Cultural literacy would be one relevant criterion here, but by itself it would not be considered sufficient reason to include particular content. Certain highly specific content such as Franklin's observation that "If

we don't hang together, we will surely hang separately" or Lincoln's Gettysburg Address is worth retaining because of its connection to ideas of enduring importance. However, other such content ("Don't shoot until you see the whites of their eyes," "Shoot if you must this old gray head . . . ") is more difficult to justify as needed to promote accomplishment of important social education goals.

3. Skills would be selected and used as tools for applying knowledge in ways that promote progress toward the major goals. Skills would be included in the curriculum in places where they were needed for this purpose and thus could be used in natural, authentic applications. Development of knowledge content would not be distorted to create opportunities for isolated skills exercises; nor would the content flow be interrupted for unrelated skills practice. Skills would be taught when introduced and used thereafter, but only in the context of applying knowledge for authentic social education purposes. Skills that were not needed for these purposes would not be taught as part of the social studies curriculum.

4. Appreciations, values, attitudes, citizen action dispositions, and social and citizen participation skills similarly would be developed in natural and authentic ways suited to the knowledge being addressed in the unit. Thus, the curriculum would be an integrated whole rather than a collection of isolated strands. Furthermore, the knowledge, skill, value, and dispositional aspects would be developed within authentic or holistic application contexts rather than addressed in isolation.

5. Questions and activities would be included because they were seen as needed for learning the content or for using it in ways that promote progress toward major goals. Student interest would be desirable but

would not by itself constitute a sufficient reason for inclusion. Questions and activities would create important learning experiences, not just entertaining discussions or enjoyable tasks.

6. Evaluation, both of the class as a whole and of individual students, also would be geared to the major goals. Thus, the emphasis would be on questions and assignments calling for communication of major understandings and for critical thinking, decision making, value analysis, and other higher order applications rather than on low-level memory items.

7. In general, planning and teaching would be structured around coherent curriculum units designed to accomplish major social education goals. There would be no intrusion of unrelated content or skills, no artificial division of material to suit a two-page lesson format, and no activities that ostensibly extend lessons or allow for subject-matter integration but actually have little social education value.

We believe that the key to accomplishing all of this is the individual teacher's understanding of social education--not just as social studies content to be covered but as a coherent citizen education effort driven by major social education goals and associated intended outcomes. Even if they are required to use inadequate materials, teachers who have clear conceptions of what they want their students to be able and disposed to do following each of their social studies units should be able to plan their units accordingly and thus improve the quality of their social studies teaching considerably. Teachers who do not yet possess a sufficiently well delineated and functional conception of social education purposes and goals can develop one by reading several social education curriculum and instruction textbooks and studying the curriculum guidelines and related policy statements issued periodically by NCSS. For more

of the authors' ideas about what is involved in teaching social studies for understanding, appreciation, and higher order applications, see Brophy (1990) and Brophy and Alleman (in press).

References

Brophy, J. (Ed.). (1989). Advances in research on teaching (Vol. 1). Greenwich, CT: JAI Press.

Brophy, J. (1990). Teaching social studies for understanding and higher-order applications. Elementary School Journal, 90, 351-417.

Brophy, J., & Alleman, J. (in press). Activities as instructional tools: A framework for analysis and evaluation. Educational Researcher.

Brophy, J., McMahon, S., & Prawat, R. (1991). Elementary social studies series: Critique of a representative example by six experts. Social Education, 55, 155-160.

Clark, C.M., & Peterson, P.L. (1986). Teachers' thought processes. In M.C. Wittrock (Ed.), Handbook of research on teaching (3rd ed., pp. 255-296). New York: Macmillan.

Elliott, D.L., & Woodward, A. (Eds.). (1990). Textbooks and schooling in the United States (89th yearbook of the National Society for the Study of Education, Part I). Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

National Council for the Social Studies. (1979). Revision of the NCSS Social Studies Curriculum Guidelines. Social Education, 43, 261-278.

Naylor, D.T., & Diem, R.A. (1987). Elementary and middle school social studies. New York: Random House.

Prawat, R.S. (1989). Teaching for understanding: Three key attributes. Teaching and Teacher Education, 5, 315-328.

Thornton, S.J. (1991). Teacher as curricular gatekeeper in social studies. In J. Shaver (Ed.), Handbook of social studies teaching and learning (pp. 237-248). New York: Macmillan.

Tyson-Bernstein, H. (1988). A conspiracy of good intentions: America's textbook fiasco. Washington, DC: Council for Basic Education.